

RUTLAND HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Quarterly

VOLUME 44 No. 3

2014

Civil War POWs and Casualties



WWW.NPS.GOV/ANDE

The National Prisoner of War Museum at Andersonville, Georgia

The Andersonville National Historic Site is comprised of the National Prisoner of War Museum, the Andersonville National Cemetery and the Camp Sumter Military Prison.

About the Author

After moving to Rutland, Robert Ranftle joined the Rutland Historical Society in 2009. He is a member of the Exhibit Committee working on the multi-year Civil War commemorative project.

This is the fifth quarterly issue that he has compiled and produced at the Society, all about the Civil War. See "For Further Reading".

Introduction

Today, in the summer of 2014, the nation is more than three years into the commemorative period for the Civil War. Organizations and individuals all over the country have delved into the details of the war, studied battlefield activity and results and related topics such as home front life, politics, logistical support and medical care.

It is safe to say that this process has brought about an increased awareness in our society of the massive scale of the war, its effect on both sides, and the consequences for the nation going forward.

The Rutland Historical Society has studied how the war affected the town of Rutland, which in 1861 was a burgeoning industrial city, with hope and promise for the future.

This Quarterly focuses on two additional aspects of the war.

Prisoners of war

At the beginning, both sides were ill-prepared to cope with the long and brutal struggle that the war turned out to be. As the war evolved the sides lost control as more and more prisoners flooded facilities that were already over capacity.

Battlefield casualties

The Civil War produced a long list of casualties. Men died not only on the battlefield, but also in training camps, prisons and hospitals. Some of the statistics demonstrate how widespread the losses were.

Locally, the human cost of the war is addressed, in terms of the losses suffered by the Rutland community. The names of men who died or who were imprisoned are gathered as well as possible.

The *Quarterly* is published by the Rutland Historical Society, 96 Center Street, Rutland VT 05701-4023. Co-editors: Jim Davidson and Jacob Sherman. Copies are \$2 each plus \$1 per order. Membership in the Society includes a subscription to the *Quarterly* and the *Newsletter*. Copyright © 2014 The Rutland Historical Society, Inc. ISSN 0748-2493.

Civil War POWs and Casualties

By Robert Ranftle

Civil War Prisons – Demographics and History

In 1903, Adjutant General of the U. S. Army F.C. Ainsworth reported to historian James Ford Rhodes that 193,743 Union and 214,865 Confederate troops were captured and imprisoned during the Civil War. Rhodes subsequently reported that over 30,000 Union and nearly 26,000 Confederate prisoners died in prison. Just over 12% of the captives in Northern prisons died, compared to 15.5% for the South.¹

POWs – Problems and Solutions

The Civil War from its outset created huge logistical problems for both the Union and the Confederacy. Every aspect of forming and supporting an army presented challenges to the governments of both sides. Training raw recruits, arming men, procuring supplies, finding capable leadership and planning for the care of sick and wounded men were major impediments to getting the armies operational.

Added to these problems was the fact that political and social pressures were applied to get men out of prison (and keep them out). With each escalation of the fighting this pressure would increase.

With many other issues to deal with, the sides could hardly be expected to put a high priority on the obligations associated with the incarceration of captured enemy soldiers (i.e. housing, caring for and feeding them).

Thus, the sides resorted to ways other than incarceration to solve the problems created by fighting battles (and taking prisoners).

Paroling of Prisoners

During the early months of the war, the policy of paroling captured prisoners prevailed. This was based on the European custom, where men could be paroled if it was assured that they would remain non-combatants, at least until they could be exchanged for “equal value” (a private for a private, etc.).

¹ Civil War Prisons, edited by William B. Hesseltine (The Kent State University Press)

Prisoner Exchange

Exchanging differed from paroling in that the exchanged prisoner could rejoin his unit and resume his duties as a soldier which, of course, meant participating in combat against the enemy.

The Union was slow to accept the idea that Confederate prisoners should be set free under any circumstances. The thinking was that any concessions would be seen by the Confederates, by the citizens of the Union, and by the world at large as recognition of the Confederacy as a viable sovereign government.

This attitude changed abruptly after the First Battle of Bull Run in July 1861, a resounding defeat for the Union at which over 1,000 Union soldiers fell into the hands of the enemy and were held captive.

Understandably, pressure was increased by both the populace and the media, to negotiate an arrangement whereby at least some of the incarcerated Union troops would be set free.

In December 1861, the Union agreed to pursue negotiations with the Confederacy for the purpose of establishing a workable prisoner exchange system. After some false starts, Union and Confederate representatives went to work to craft an agreement to formalize the exchange system, and work out the fine points (e.g. how many sergeants would be swapped for a lieutenant?)

Agreement was reached on July 22, 1862 with the signing of the Dix – Hill Cartel, a contract that spelled out the terms of the exchange program, and also the terms that would guide the paroling of prisoners. The agreement held up for over a year.

In 1862 and most of 1863, from an administrative perspective, the responsibilities and problems attendant to the taking of prisoners were not yet out of control (although prison conditions themselves never approached a satisfactory level).

Collapse of the Exchange Program²

The prisoner exchange system collapsed in late 1863 for a number of reasons.

- The failure of Confederates to observe the terms of parole. Most significantly, Confederates who were paroled after the fall of Vicksburg in July turned up later that year at Chattanooga.
- The unwillingness of the Confederates to exchange black Union prisoners, claiming that they were likely escaped slaves and, as such, they were the property of their southern owners.

² The Collapse of the Confederacy, Edited by Mark Grimsley and Brooks D. Simpson, (University of Nebraska Press)

- General Grant (a pragmatist) was not especially supportive of the exchange policy, realizing that the current depleted state of the Confederate forces was an advantage to the Union, and should not be mitigated.

The stalemate, which went on from late 1863 until early 1865, was broken only when the Confederates agreed to exchange all prisoners, regardless of color, and Grant dropped his opposition to the policy.

Main Civil War Prison Facilities³

Throughout the war, there were few prisons which were built specifically for the purpose of housing enemy prisoners. Facilities that were chosen for use fit into one of five “models”: forts, large old buildings (factories, warehouses), open areas with tents, stockades, and enclosed barracks. Proximity to transportation links (rail lines and ports especially) was a critical factor in the selection process.⁴

Approximately 150 facilities housed prisoners during the four years of the Civil War; some were used only briefly as staging areas, and could hardly be called prisons. The following is a list of key prisons, by the year that they began taking in prisoners.

Start	North	South
1861 or earlier	Camp Chase, Columbus, Oh. Fort Warren, Boston, Mass. Old Capitol Prison, Washington., D.C.	Castle Pinckney, S. C. Castle Thunder, Richmond, Va. Salisbury Prison, Salisbury, N.C.
1862 – 63	Camp Douglas, Chicago Fort Delaware, Delaware Cnty, De. Johnson’s Island, Marblehead, Oh. Point Lookout, St. Mary’s, Md. Rock Island Arsenal, Rock Isl., Il.	Belle Isle, Richmond, Va. Cahaba Prison, Cahaba, Al. Camp Ford, Tyler, Tx. Danville Prison, Danville, Va. Libby Prison, Richmond, Va.
1864	Elmira Prison Camp	Camp Sumter (Andersonville) Blackshear Pris., Blackshear, Ga. Florence Stockade, Florence, SC

Milestones in the Development of Prisons

Key milestones in the evolution of military prisons for the period of the war were:

³ Main sources for this section are Hesseltine and Wikipedia, “American Civil War Prison Camps”

⁴ “Civil War Prisons”, Hesseltine

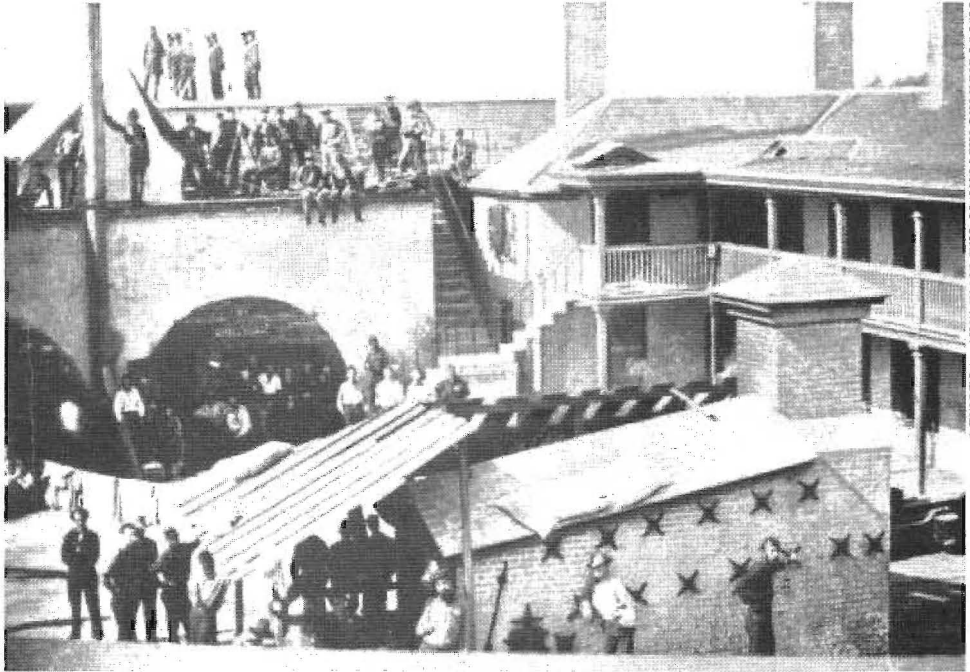
April 1861

Denial in the Union of the legitimacy of the Confederacy; very few preparations were being made.

July 1861

Over one thousand Union troops are taken prisoner at First Bull Run, and are transported to Confederate prisons (because there were few Confederate POWs to exchange them for).

Concern builds in the North for incarcerated Union troops.



Union Prisoners at Castle Pinckney after the battle of Bull Run.

December 1861 – July 1862

An agreement to exchange prisoners is negotiated (the Dix – Hill agreement).

July 1862 – August 1863

The formal system of paroles and exchanges is in effect.

August 1863

The exchange system breaks down.

August 1863 – Early 1865

Both sides look for additional facilities at which to house prisoners.

Large camps are opened in 1864.

Early 1865

The system of exchanges and paroles is reinstated.

April, 1865

The Civil War ends. The release of prisoners begins, with camp closings to follow.

Andersonville – Life at a POW Camp

(Warren Lee Goss was a private in the 2nd Massachusetts Regiment of Heavy Artillery. He is the author of "The Soldier's Story.....of his Captivity at Andersonville, Belle Isle, and Other Rebel Prisons". This work, published in 1868, provides a first-hand account of the life of a prisoner at Andersonville in 1864)

Construction of the Camp Sumter prison facility at Andersonville began in early 1864, for the purpose of relocating Union prisoners to a more secure location, and as a way to procure necessary food supplies.

Camp Sumter was only in operation for fourteen months. However, during that time 45,000 Union soldiers were imprisoned there, and nearly 13,000 died from disease, poor sanitation, malnutrition, overcrowding, or exposure.

The prison was a stockade-style facility, enclosed by a fifteen foot high stockade wall. The prison was enlarged in June 1864, in an attempt to compensate for overpopulation.

In his work, Pvt. Goss relates stories and facts about prison life which demonstrate how degraded human life can become, when respect and love for one's fellow man fade away, making life unrecognizable to those outside. The following are only a sample, but they provide an idea of the conditions under which men served their time:

The Dead Line

This was an area close to the border of the stockade, defined by stakes in the ground. Prisoners were forbidden to enter this space, under penalty of summary execution by guards.

Rewards in the form of furloughs and other gratuities were extended to guards who killed transgressors. This "discipline" was encouraged by the prison command. (The policy was included in the standing orders, so there could be no doubt what the source was.)

The Blanket and the Tin Pail

A man's health and sustenance were of utmost importance for survival. A simple blanket could be used (with some tree branches) to construct a small tent to ward off some of the rain and hot sun. A tin pail could allow the cooking of rations, to prevent or inhibit sicknesses caused by ingesting uncooked food.

Mostly, these were communal facilities, shared by four or five men. It was necessary to form these alliances not only to pool resources but also as protection against thieves and cutthroats. It was as important to protect and defend one's resources as it was to defend one's own person.

Possession of these and other meager implements was one of the marginal standards of prison existence that would mean life or death to thousands of men.

Honor and Dishonor among Men

Imprisoned men under extreme deprivation and suffering will behave heroically or otherwise based on their character, and the ability to maintain moral and physical strength. Some rise to the occasion and become de-facto leaders, who inspire and encourage others to follow the path to survival. Others do whatever it takes to survive, regardless of the consequences to others. Both of these types were present in abundance at Andersonville.

Crimes committed against fellow inmates, which would be considered petty offenses in normal times, were nothing short of manslaughter in prison. To steal a man's blanket or tin pail was simply to remove the necessities of life from his possession.

Thievery was often a crime committed by organized gangs who would terrorize those who had anything worth stealing, and who would often kill the victim in order to protect their own anonymity.

After one particularly brutal crime, a robbery and mass murder committed by an organized gang of thieves, a militia was organized. A man nicknamed "Big Peter" led the investigation. The crime was swiftly solved by the discovery of bodies along with incriminating evidence.

With the consent of prison officials, an ad-hoc courtroom and trial was set up, complete with competent attorneys (including at least one rebel officer), jurors and witnesses. When a guilty verdict was reached, the rebel officers delivered the offenders to an execution squad of prisoners, to be hanged.

Rapidly at the conclusion of this incident, a prison police force was formed (under "Big Peter"), a court was established with a presiding judge, and some of the men became practicing lawyers who took fees in the form of food and some currency. This worked rather well, and evolved into a form of ad-hoc governmental system within the prison.

Petitions

Among the prisoners were some who persistently attempted to get others to sign statements representing conditions at the prison. The

prison command agreed to deliver these petitions to Union authorities. Ostensibly, the petitions were allowed by a magnanimous captor, and were gestures of kindness, or olive branches to the union government.

Most prisoners, however, saw this as a crass attempt by the rebels to gain favorable terms for cease-fire or for other negotiating points. Men who circulated the petitions were considered pawns of the rebels, and were not looked upon favorably. The prisoners could see for themselves that their suffering was being inflicted by the rebel leadership, and was not attributable in any way to the leaders of the Union. These attitudes and reactions reassured many a prisoner, who may have doubted his ability to persist in the cause of the Union, and to survive the current ordeal.

“Exchange on the Brain”

One of the greatest enemies of a prisoner’s resolve (as well as his sanity) was the constant flow of rumors of prisoner exchanges. In some cases these were started by the rebels, whose motives included maintaining control of the prisoners, discouraging attempts to escape and other self-serving purposes.

These rumors, when proven false, had a devastating effect on many prisoners, who then fell to such a level of despair that they lost the will to continue. In a seven-month period from February to September of 1864, 12,000 men died at Andersonville. Many of those succumbed only because they had been unable to sustain themselves emotionally after having had their hearts broken by one-too-many cruel rumors that proved false.⁵

Escape Plans and Attempts

Escaping the prison was as much a fixation with the men as was rumors of exchange. There were many and constant attempts to escape, even though this was an offense punishable by death. Only by tunneling, or by making a run for it while outside the prison (e.g. while gathering wood), could escape be accomplished.

Escaping itself was relatively easier than remaining free. Policing of details outside the prison was sometimes lax, and men could run and elude capture for a time. Tracking by bloodhounds, however, almost always brought the escapees back.

Paradoxically, even though escape attempts were an offense punishable by death, the Rebel command did not always enforce this. Warren Lee Goss himself did attempt an escape by tunneling, and was clear of

⁵ Most prisoners had no idea that the system of exchanges had broken down late in 1863.

the prison border when the tunnel collapsed on him. He was rescued from suffocating only when some rebel sentries came along and pulled him out and brought him back to confinement unharmed.

Warren Lee Goss lived through his ordeal because he learned the ropes of prison life, and because he kept his spirits up and maintained his personal well-being. These were the most important prerequisites to survival in a Civil War prison.



PHOTOGRAPHIC HISTORY OF THE CIVIL WAR – VOLUME 7

Andersonville Stockade, showing the overcrowded conditions and the many makeshift living quarters (shebangs).



PHOTOGRAPHIC HISTORY OF THE CIVIL WAR – VOLUME 7

“The failure of negotiations for exchange of prisoners in 1864 was responsible for many of these rows of prisoners’ graves.”⁶

⁶ Photo caption from “The Photographic History of the Civil War – Volume 7”

Elmira Prison Camp – The Scourge of Elmira⁷

Many Vermonters would be surprised to learn that one of the most notorious prisons, North or South, was just down the road in neighboring New York State. Elmira Prison Camp opened its gates in July 1864, and was poorly conceived and executed from the beginning.

In late 1863, with no end to the war in sight and with the prisoner exchange system having broken down, the Union leaders in Washington concluded that new prison facilities were needed.

In May 1864, Adjutant General of the Army E. D. Townshend reported that the military camp at Elmira had several barracks unoccupied, which could be used to house “a large number of those lately captured”. Orders were issued to Elmira camp commander Colonel Seth Eastman to set apart the unused barracks, to form a housing facility for 10,000 prisoners who would soon be sent there.

In fact, the barracks that were earmarked for use would be able to house only 4,000 men, with a possible overflow of 1,000 in tents. No hospital facilities were included in the layout.

The site of the camp included a 1-acre pond (Foster’s Pond) which was already stagnant. During the camp’s existence, this pond would be used to dump garbage and sewage, creating a toxic mess right at the doorstep of the prisoners.

From early July until the middle of August of 1864, 9,600 captured Confederates were sent to the prison. This created an overcrowding situation matching that of most other Civil War prisons, and perpetuated the situation the new prison was supposed to relieve.

From mid-August on, things got worse:

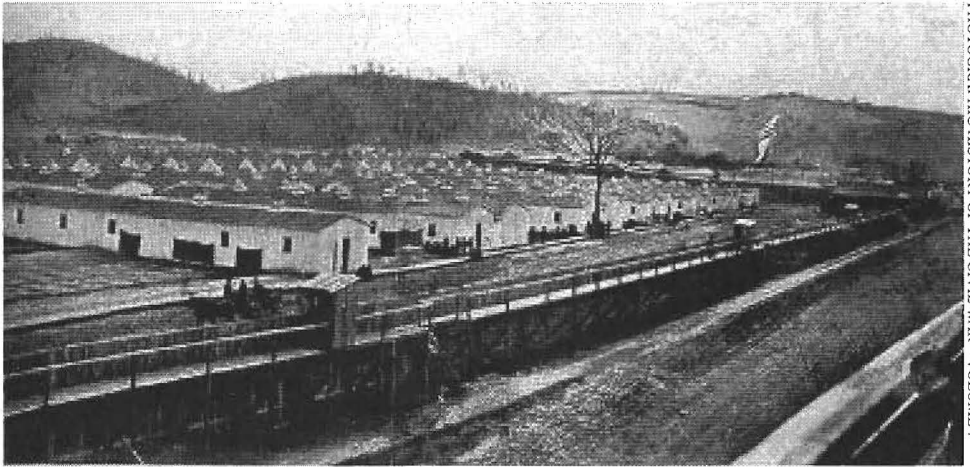
- In September, disease became a major problem: first scurvy, then diarrhea, pneumonia, and smallpox. Treatment facilities had to be squeezed into the already overcrowded area.
- Most detainees had arrived without any clothing to speak of, and the cold northern winter was on the horizon. Clothing was sent from the South, but most of it was denied to the men and was burned. (Union Commissary of Prisons Hoffman had decided that the clothing had to be gray.) During the winter, with the temperature reaching minus 15, death by exposure became the fate of many of the imprisoned men.
- Rations were meager when the prison opened and only decreased over time.

⁷ “Civil War Prisons”, Hesseltine, article “The Scourge of Elmira” by James L. Robertson, Jr.

- In October, 1,200 of the inmates at Elmira were shipped to Washington D.C., to alleviate the overcrowding. These inmates were to be relocated or possibly exchanged. Over 100 of them arrived in Washington either near-death or “totally unfit for travel”. These were men who were supposed to be able to make the trip.

When the war ended in April 1865, the process of closing the prison and sending the men home began. The prison was empty by early July, save for those still in the hospital.

During its lifetime, the Elmira Prison Camp housed 12,123 prisoners, of which 2,963 died (24%), making it one of the deadliest camps on either side.



PHOTOGRAPHIC HISTORY OF THE CIVIL WAR - VOLUME 7

Elmira Prison Camp, showing the barracks buildings which were used to house most of the inmates.

Common Problems and Root Causes

From the descriptions of life at Andersonville and at Elmira, it is apparent that there were a host of pervasive problems that affected both sides. The idea that one side or the other was more abusive, or that one side suffered more than the other, may still be argued, but it seems that it was overriding factors that caused prison life to be intolerable.

- Union forces were sent to fight (and be captured) in the South, where they were confronted with maladies their bodies were not used to, and therefore contracted diseases in heavy numbers.

- Confederate forces fought mostly on their own turf, but when captured they were sent north, to a climate their bodies were not used to (e.g Elmira, minus 15 degrees), and therefore contracted diseases and overexposure in heavy numbers.
- The unexpected duration and intensity of the war swelled the number of captives well beyond the capacity of the prisons. Overcrowding was a prime cause of disease and malnutrition on both sides.
- The actions of governments made things much worse than they had to be. Intransigence over negotiating points caused hope for humane treatment of POWs to be lost.
 - The North's unwillingness to negotiate with the Confederacy.
 - The South's refusal to include blacks in the exchange discussions.
 - The South's unwillingness to abide by the negotiated agreement for paroles and exchanges.
 - Grant's lack of support for exchanges.
 - Each side's lack of trust in the other.⁸

In hindsight, would the leaders do things differently?

Was Grant right to deny his support for prisoner exchanges? After all, those exchanged rebels would return to their units to kill Grant's troops. Was that worse than keeping men in prison, with abhorrent conditions that only deteriorated over time?

Would the Confederacy, with its limited resources dwindling rapidly, ever abide by the agreed-upon rules of prisoner parole and exchange? Even if it meant surrender?

These are difficult questions.

Rutland POWs

Note: In the lists which follow, a "Rutlander" is one who was born or was buried in Rutland, or is credited to the town in the records. The credited Rutlanders were enlisted in Rutland and probably lived in the area at the time, but no record other than the enlistment has been found.

⁸ There were instances where cruelty was unopposed (and supported) simply because it was felt that the other side was doing the same.

The following are Rutlanders who were imprisoned in Confederate prison camps during the war.

Name	Rank	Unit	POW	Captured at	Imprisoned
<u>Born, buried in Rutland</u>					
LeClair, Edgar J.	Pvt	1st Vt Cav.	10/11/63	Brandy Sta.	Andersonville
<u>Born in Rutland</u>					
Knights, John Q. A.	Pvt	2nd NY Cav	08/20/62	Culpepper	Aikens Land
<u>Buried in Rutland</u>					
Alexander, Eugene	Pvt	2 Vt LARTY	08/03/63	Jackson, La	Andersonville
Baker, Artemas C.	Pvt	16th Inf.	03/09/63		
Cusack, James	Pvt	multiple	09/30/64	Poplar Spgs.	
Everson, James Jr.	Sgt	1st Vt Inf	09/22/63		
		1st Vt Cav			
Foley, John J.	Pvt	2 Vt LARTY	08/03/63	Jackson, La	
Huntoon, Franklin	Cpt	1st Vt Inf.	03/02/63	Aldie	
		1st Vt Cav.			
		U S Navy			
Lander, Joseph	Pvt	10th Inf.	07/09/64	Monocracy	
Lewis, Nathaniel B.	CSgt	1st Vt Cav.	09/22/63		
Linsley, Herbert W.	unk	unk	06/23/64	Weldon RR	Salisbury, NC
Mason, James	3Sgt	5th Vt Inf.	06/29/63	Savage's Sta.	Savage's Sta.
Needham, Joseph	1 Lt	4th Vt Inf.	06/23/64	Weldon RR	Columbia, SC
Sanderson, Abner	Pvt	1st Vt Cav	05/24/62		
Sargent, Andrew J.	2 Lt	8th Vt Inf.	09/04/62	Boutte Sta.	
Spafford, Henry W.	CSgt	4th Vt Inf.	10/11/63		
Taylor, Thomas W.	Pvt	5th Vt Inf.	06/29/62	Savage's Sta.	
Tierney, Michael C.	Pvt	4th Vt Inf.	06/23/64	Weldon RR	Andersonville
Williams, Leland J	Pvt	10th Inf.	04/02/65		
Wilson, Thomas	Pvt	4th Vt Inf.	06/29/62	Savage's Sta.	
Wilson, Thomas	Pvt	4th Vt Inf.	06/29/62	Savage's Sta.	
Woodward, Curtis	Cpl.	1st Vt Inf.	03/17/63	Herndon Sta.	
		1st Vt Cav.			
<u>Credited to Rutland</u>					
Arbitraca, Giovanni	Pvt	2nd Vt Inf.	05/21/64	Virginia	Andersonville
Barrett, James	2 Lt	1st Vt Inf.	05/24/62		
		1st Vt Cav.			
Blake, John	Pvt	7th Vt Inf.	02/09/64	Choctawotchie	
Breckinreed, H.	Cpl.	2nd Vt Inf.	07/21/61	Richmond	
Burns, John	Pvt	7th Vt Inf.	02/09/64	Choctawotchie	
Covel, William	Pvt	3rd Vt Inf.	06/01/64		
Covel, William	Pvt	3rd Vt Inf.	06/01/64		
Currier, Frank	Pvt	5th Vt Inf.	06/29/62	Savage's Sta.	
Currier, Frank	Pvt	5th Vt Inf.	06/29/62	Savage's Sta.	
Curtis, Loren	Pvt	5th Vt Inf.	05/05/64	Wilderness	
Dickinson, John W.	2 Lt	11th Inf.	06/23/64	Weldon RR	Andersonville

Farrington, William	SGT	2nd Vt Inf.	10/19/64	Cedar Creek	
Fitzgerald, Wm. E.	SGT	multiple	10/07/64	Columbia Furn.	
Garue, Zebulon	QSgt	1st Vt Cav.	3/2/63		
Gibbs, Francis A.	Pvt	1st Vt Cav.	6/29/64	Stony Creek	Andersonville
Hall, Henry C.	Pvt	7th Vt Inf.	03/31/65	Spanish Fort	
Henry, Harlon	Pvt	15th Ma Inf	10/21/61	Ball's Bluff	
Hinckley, Carlos C.	Pvt	11th Inf.	06/23/64	Weldon RR	
Hopkins, John	Pvt	10th Inf.	07/09/64	Monocracy	
Howard, James H.	Pvt	1st Vt Cav.	n d		Andersonville
Kirk, John F.	Pvt	5th Vt Inf.	06/27/63		
LaClaire, Reno	Pvt	11th Inf.	06/23/64	Weldon RR	Andersonville
Locklin, Ralph	Pvt	1st Vt Cav.	05/24/62		
Maguire, John	Pvt	1st Vt Cav.	07/24/64		
Manion, Patrick	Pvt	9th Vt Inf.	02/02/64	Newport Barr.	Andersonville
Martin, Joel R.	Pvt	5th Vt Inf.	06/29/62	Savage's Sta.	Savage's Sta.
		9th Vt Inf.			
McClunin, Almon	Pvt	1st Vt Cav.	03/01/64	Mechanicville	
Mead, Carlos Eug.	Cpl.	1st U.S.S.S.	06/22/64	Weldon RR	
		2nd U.S.S.S.			
		4th Vt Inf.			
Preston, Thaddeus	Pvt	11th Inf.	06/23/64	Weldon RR	
Prince, Daniel	Pvt	8th Vt Inf.	09/04/64		
Ray, Joseph F.	Pvt	11th Inf.	06/21/64		Andersonville
Reed, Dean Wilder	Pvt	1st Vt Cav.	07/01/63		Andersonville
Rounds, Ruell Jos.	Pvt	12th Vt Inf.	06/23/64	Weldon RR	Andersonville
		1st Vt Cav.			
Saint John, Andrew	Pvt	11th Inf.	06/23/64	Weldon RR	Andersonville
Schaffner, Charles	Pvt	10th Inf.	07/09/64	Monocracy	
Skiddy, John	Pvt	2nd Vt Inf.	05/05/64	Wilderness	Andersonville
Stewart, James A.	1Sgt	1st Vt Cav.	05/24/62		
Stocker, Henry W.	Pvt	7th Vt Inf.	02/09/64	Choctawotchie	Andersonville
Tatro, Peter	Pvt	11th Vt Inf.	10/19/64	Cedar Creek	
Warner, George M.	Pvt	1st Vt Inf	unknown		Andersonville
		NY Vet Cav			

You Can't Keep a Good (Rutland) Man Down – the John Foley story⁹

John J. Foley was born in Ireland on November 6, 1838. When he was 14 years old he came to America.

Mr. Foley enlisted in the Union forces on 11 December 1861, and joined the 2nd Vermont Light Artillery Battery unit.

On August 3, 1863, his unit came under attack by the Confederates at Jackson, Louisiana, and he was taken prisoner. He was transported to the prison at Belle Isle, Virginia and later was transferred to Camp Sumter prison at Andersonville, Georgia.

From the Rutland Herald: "Mr. Foley made a successful attempt to escape. For 17 days he was pursued and hunted and was at all times in imminent danger of capture, but finally succeeded in making his way out of hostile territory, having undergone terrible hardships."

"The notoriously bad conditions in the Confederate prisons undermined his health and he never entirely recovered from the effects of his imprisonment. For the last nine years of his life, he was unable to work."

"Mr. Foley died on February 11, 1916, at his home on Bellevue Avenue, Rutland, and was buried in Calvary Cemetery. His funeral service was attended by a large delegation from the Roberts post of the Grand Army of the Republic, of which Mr. Foley was a member."¹⁰

He rejoined Union forces at Decatur, Georgia on 26 September 1864. The fact that he rejoined Union forces after 17 days on the run is a remarkable accomplishment.

"According to surviving Confederate records, only 351 prisoners escaped from Andersonville, which means that only around 0.7% of all prisoners ever managed to escape. However, those same records indicate that many of these men were recaptured and returned to Andersonville or sent to other prison facilities.....According to National Archive records, 32 Union soldiers are confirmed to have escaped from Andersonville between February of 1864 and May of 1865. This means that 0.07%, or only one out of every 1,400 prisoners held at Andersonville successfully escaped."¹¹

Those Rutlanders just don't take no for an answer.

(The Society's thanks go to Thomas Foley of Collierville, Tennessee, who contributed to the summary of John J. Foley's life.)

⁹ The Rutland Daily Herald, February 12-14, 1916

¹⁰ Ibid

¹¹ National Parks Service, Andersonville National Historic Site, "Successful Escapes from Andersonville"

Civil War Casualties

Nationally, the Civil War resulted in over 1,000,000 casualties, including approximately 620,000 soldier deaths (2/3 by disease). Some researchers have estimated that the number of soldier deaths could be much higher.¹²

Approximately 56,000 of the soldier deaths occurred in prison camps.¹³

There is no official count of the number of men who were wounded, permanently disabled or otherwise scarred by the war. (Approximately 60,000 men lost limbs.)¹⁴

Vermont Facts and Figures

In "Revised Roster of Vermont Volunteers, during the War of the Rebellion 1861 -1866"¹⁵, Adjutant General Theodore S. Peck reported (to the Governor of Vermont) that:

- 1,832 Vermont soldiers were either killed in action, or died of wounds inflicted
- 3,405 died of disease, in prison, or from accident.
- Total, 5,237.

Tabulation of individual unit statistics from Adjutant General Peck produced the following additional facts:¹⁶

- Approximately 600 Vermonters died in prison, out of the 2,200 imprisoned during the war, for a percentage of 27%.
- Approximately 4,700 Vermonters were wounded on the battlefield.

The state of Vermont has long been recognized by historians and Civil War experts as having played a vital role in the successes of the Union army, and having paid a heavy price. In his work, Adjutant General Peck cites some of the observations made by Colonel William F. Fox in his recap of losses sustained during the war.¹⁷

- The 1st Vermont Brigade (the "Old Brigade") sustained the heaviest losses of any brigade-strength unit in all the Union armies.

¹² "Recounting the Dead", The New York Times, September 20, 2011

¹³ "Civil War Prisons", Hesseltine

¹⁴ "When Necessity Meets Ingenuity", The New York Times, March 4, 2004

¹⁵ Revised Roster of Vermont Volunteers, during the War of the Rebellion 1861 -1866, Theodore S. Peck, Adjutant General

¹⁶ "Revised Roster of Vermont Volunteers", Peck

¹⁷ "Regimental Losses in the American Civil War", William F. Fox, quoted by Peck

Says Colonel Fox, "The greatest loss of life in any one brigade during the war occurred in the Vermont Brigade, of the Second Division, of the Sixth Corps."

- The 1st Vermont Cavalry took heavy casualties throughout the war. Colonel Fox states: "It is admitted that it was second to none, however, in captures of guns, prisoners and battle flags."
- Colonel Fox cites 300 regiments (out of over 2,000 in the Union armies) that saw heavy action, as evidenced by number of casualties. There are nine Vermont regiments on that list:
 - First Regiment Vermont Cavalry, Second, Third, Fourth, Fifth, Sixth, Tenth and Seventeenth Regiments of Infantry
 - First Regiment Vermont Heavy Artillery (Eleventh Regiment)
- Company F, First Regiment United States Sharpshooters was one of two units cited by Colonel Fox as experiencing "the greatest loss in killed and wounded of any company organization from Vermont".¹⁸

Rutlanders Who Lost Their Lives

The old Town of Rutland suffered significant casualties, as did just about every city and town in the state.

The following are lists of the Rutlanders who were killed in battle, died of disease, or otherwise lost their lives in service.

Died of Disease

Name	Rank	Unit	Date of Death	Cause of Death	Died at
Born in Rutland					
Day, George	unk	16th NY Inf	08/12/64		Ft. Magruder
Heeny, Christopher	unk	2nd NY Cav	07/21/64		New Orleans
Langley, Lewis W.	Pvt	54th Maine	9/3/65		
Packard, Horace C.	Pvt	27th Ma Inf	07/06/63		New Bern, NC
Wheeler, Enos L.	Pvt	20th US Clrd	9/21/65	diarrhea	New Orleans
Woodruff, Joel W.	unk	154th NY Inf	3/25/65		Goldsboro, NC
Buried in Rutland					
Coppins, Palmer E.	Pvt	7th Vt Inf.	06/21/62		Carrollton, La
Dorrance, Henry M	Pvt	7th Vt Inf.	10/26/64		
Fuller, Augustus	Pvt	12th Inf.	03/30/63		
Healey, Thomas B.	Pvt	7th Vt Inf.	10/23/62		Burlington
		4th Vt Inf.	10/23/62		Burlington
Ladd, Alfred	unk	2nd Vt Inf.			

¹⁸ Company E, 5th Regiment was the other company cited.

Lamb, Nicholas	Pvt	13th Inf.	07/04/63	typhoid fever	Washington DC
Long, Arunah A.	Cpl.	7th Vt Inf.	10/07/62		Carrollton, La
McGinniss, John	1 Lt	9th Vt Inf.	11/10/65		
Post, Alpha Cheney	Pvt	7th Vt Inf.	08/27/62		
Rising, Cyrus P.	Hos St	7th Vt Inf.	10/14/62		Carrollton, La
Wilson, Thomas	Pvt	4th Vt Inf.	1/28/70		
Credited to Rutland					
Ayers, Joseph	Pvt	13th Inf.	01/27/63	inflammation	
Barker, Isaac	Pvt	7th Vt Inf.	08/03/62		Baton Rouge
Bigelow, Amasa P.	Pvt	7th Vt Inf.	10/07/62		
Bishop, Smith B.	Pvt	7th Vt Inf.	12/03/62		Carrollton, La
Bradley, Joshua H.	Pvt	12th Inf.	05/26/63		
Brewer, Samuel Jr.	Pvt	9th Vt Inf.	12/19/63		
Brown, John A.	Pvt	7th Vt Inf.	08/12/62		
Burbee, Peter D.	Pvt	11th Inf.	12/30/64		
Butler, Edward	Pvt	7th Vt Inf.	10/13/62		
Cheney, George A.	Pvt	7th Vt Inf.	12/15/62		
Covel, William	Pvt	3rd Vt Inf.	unk		Andersonville
Currier, Frank	Pvt	5th Vt Inf.	10/26/62	lung disease	Alexandria
Firman, Aaron G.	Pvt	7th Vt Inf.	10/02/64		
Freeman, Daniel W.	Pvt	5th Vt Inf.	10/29/62		
Freeman, John H.	Pvt	54th Maine	02/15/64		
Goodyear, Horace E.	Pvt	6th Vt Inf.	06/30/64		
Gookins, John M.	Pvt	1st Vt Cav.	10/29/64		
Hanson, Edwin H.	Pvt	1st Vt Cav.	09/10/64	diarrhea	Pt. Lookout
Heap, Andrew	Pvt	7th Vt Inf.	01/01/63		
McDonough, John	Pvt	7th Vt Inf.	09/28/62		
McIntyre, Thomas	Pvt	7th Vt Inf.	12/16/62		
Mead, George	Pvt	7th Vt Inf.	07/31/62		
Meade, George E.	Pvt	1st U.S.S.S.	09/09/62		
Mortrom, Geo. W.	Pvt	7th Vt Inf.	09/17/62		
O'Neil, William	Pvt	11th Inf.	1/13/64	gastro enter.	Fort Slocum
Powers, Henry C.	Pvt	7th Vt Inf.	04/27/65		
Rugg, Nelson B.	Pvt	7th Vt Inf.	08/29/62		
Sanborn, Eben K.	Surg	multiple	04/03/62	typhoid fever	Ship Island
Selleck, Jonathan B.	Pvt	7th Vt Inf.	02/09/63		
Severance, Life A.	Pvt	6th Vt Inf.	08/22/62		
Smith, George W.	Pvt	7th Vt Inf.	07/26/62		
Sprague, Wooster	Pvt	2nd Vt Inf.	04/22/62	lung infection	
Stocker, John F.	Pvt	7th Vt Inf.	08/29/62		
Thompson, William	1 Sgt	1st Vt Inf.	10/07/62		
		7th Vt Inf.			
Warner, George M.	Pvt	1st Vt Inf	07/28/64	scorbutus	Andersonville
		NY Vet Cav			

Died on the Battlefield

Name	Rank	Unit	Mortally Wounded	Wounded at	Killed in Action at
Born in Rutland					
Ford, Charles A.	Cpl.	5th Vt Inf.			Petersburg
Ford, Hadley P.	Pvt	2nd Vt Inf.	5/18/64	Spotsylvania	
Martyn, James R.	Sgt	5th Vt Inf.	5/5/64	Wilderness	
Buried in Rutland					
Mead, Charles B.	Cpl.	1st U.S.S.S.			Petersburg
Riley, John	Pvt	9th Vt Inf.	9/29/64	Chapin's Frm	
Roberts, George T.	Col	multiple	8/5/62	Baton Rouge	
Sinnott, John T.	1 Lt	13th Inf.	7/3/63	Gettysburg	
Credited to Rutland					
Bailey, Charles H.	Pvt	2nd Vt Inf.	6/6/64	Cold Harbor	
Belair, Joseph	Pvt	5th Vt Inf.			Winchester
Blake, Thomas	Sgt	13th Inf.			Gettysburg
Casman, William	Pvt	5th Vt Inf.	5/12/64	Spotsylvania	
Corey, Patrick	Pvt	13th Inf.			Gettysburg
Day, William H.	Pvt	1st Vt Cav.	8/25/64	Monocracy	
Donovan, Michael	Pvt	1st Vt Cav.			Middle Road
Eldred, Henry Green	Pvt	2nd U.S.S.S.	6/18/64	Petersburg	
Giddings, Edwin A.	Pvt	1st U.S.S.S.			Wilderness
Hagan, Joseph	Pvt	1st U.S.S.S.			Wilderness
Haggarty, Patrick	Pvt	3rd Vt Inf.			Wilderness
Hathorn, Albert	Cpl.	2nd Vt Inf.			Petersburg
Hopkins, Patrick	Pvt	10th Inf.	7/9/64	Monocracy	
Howard, George J.	Sgt	5th Vt Inf.	4/2/65	Petersburg	
Laggasser, Joseph	Pvt	4th U.S. Inf.			Wilderness
Locklin, Dennis	Pvt	10th Inf.	7/9/64	Monocracy	
McEnerny, Michael	Cpl.	13th Inf.			Gettysburg
Minogue, William	Pvt	2nd Vt Inf.			Wilderness
Moren, Henry	Sgt	5th Vt Inf.	5/5/64	Wilderness	
Moylan, Michael	Pvt	13th Inf.			Gettysburg
Murray, Patrick	Pvt	1st U.S.S.S.			Kellys Ford
Owens, John	Pvt	1st Vt Cav.	6/13/64	Cold Harbor	
Reynolds, Edwin F.	Cpt	1st Vt Inf			Lee's Mill
		6th Vt Inf			
Small, George R.	Pvt	1 Vt LARTY	5/26/63		
Stowe, Daniel W.	Pvt	6th Vt Inf.	5/5/64	Wilderness	
Worthen, Henry M.	Wag	1st Vt Cav.			Gettysburg
York, Hiram C.	Pvt	4th Vt Inf.	5/5/64	Wilderness	

Died in the Service – Other Causes

Name	Rank	Unit	Date of Death	Cause of Death
Cain, Avery Billings	BMaj	4th US Inf	03/16/79	service
Gibson, John		2nd NY Cav	06/01/64	drowning
Cain, Henry			01/08/62	service
Colburn, Henry N.	1 Lt	1 Vt LARTY	08/07/62	drowned
McDonnell, Michael	LNDS	USN	06/08/66	service
McLaughlin, Joseph	Pvt	13th Inf.	08/22/64	murdered
Persons, Lewis	Mus	7th Vt Inf.	09/17/62	suicide
Robbins, William F.	Cpl.	4th Vt Inf.	12/12/62	service
Spellman, William	Recr	None	04/01/62	accident

Rutlanders – Sacrifices and Hardships

The Ford Brothers¹⁹

The Ford family came to Vermont from Massachusetts sometime in the early 1840s. Two of the sons were born in Rutland, and the family eventually moved to Brandon, where they resided in 1861.

When the Civil War broke out, the now teenage sons put aside their hopes and dreams and answered the country's call to arms. Unfortunately, the story ends tragically for the Fords.

Charles A. Ford (born in Rutland) was the first of the three sons to enlist, on September 4, 1861, joining the 5th Vermont Infantry.

Hadley P. Ford (born in Rutland) was next, enlisting on October 17, 1861, and joining the 2nd Vermont Infantry. He was just 16 years old at the time of his enlistment.

John S. Ford was the last brother to sign up, enlisting on July 18, 1862 and joining the 10th Vermont Infantry.

John Ford was killed in action on November 27, 1863 at Mine Run (a/k/a Orange Grove).

Despite the loss of their brother just three and a half weeks earlier, both Charles and Hadley re-enlisted in the Union Army on December 21, 1863.

On May 18, 1864, Hadley Ford went into action at Spotsylvania and was severely wounded. He died of his wounds later that day.

In the final cruel twist of fate, Charles Ford was killed in action on April 2, 1865, at Petersburg. This battle became known as the Fall of Petersburg, and opened the city to the Union troops, and to ultimate victory. General Lee surrendered just one week later.

It is hard to imagine more misfortune coming to a single family, the members of which had only tried to do what was right for their country.

¹⁹ Sources are the "Vermont in the Civil War" website, and Peck

The Stocker Brothers²⁰

The Stockers were another Rutland family which met with misfortune in the war.

John Stocker was born in 1839. In December 1861, he enlisted in the Vermont volunteers and joined the 7th Regiment. In August of 1862, he became one of the many men to lose his life to disease in the deep South. He is buried in Louisiana.

Henry W. Stocker also joined the 7th Regiment in December 1861. In February of 1864, he was taken prisoner at Choctawatchie Bay and was sent to Andersonville. In October, he became one of the many men to die there. He is buried at Andersonville National Cemetery.

A third brother, George Albert Stocker, enlisted in September 1862 and joined the 14th Regiment. He survived the war, and is buried in Cheney Hill Cemetery in Rutland.

The Mead Brothers

Charles Mead mustered into Co. F of the 1st United States Sharpshooters in September, 1862. He was killed in action at Petersburg, Virginia on June 17, 1864. Charles was a prolific writer; much of the historical content that exists for the Sharpshooters comes from the diaries that Charles maintained throughout his service.

Carlos Eugene Mead, brother to Charles, was only 17 years of age when he entered the service. He was wounded twice in combat, at Kelly's Ford in 1863 and again on September 11, 1864. He witnessed the death of his brother Charles at Petersburg and, just days later, was taken prisoner at Weldon Railroad. Eugene served to the conclusion of the War, finally leaving the service in June, 1865.

The Mead family is well known to Rutland historians; the writings of Charles Mead have been featured in three previous issues of the Quarterly publication. See For Further Reading.

Major Avery Billings Cain²¹

Major Avery Billings Cain was born in Rutland February 18, 1840. He was appointed to a second lieutenancy in the 4th United States Infantry on August 5, 1861. Major Cain served in the army of the Potomac, commanding his unit (I Company) during the Peninsula Campaign. Later, at Chancellorsville, he won his brevet of captain for exceptional gallantry. He was commissioned full captain October 9, 1863. He commanded his regiment, as well as the 2d United States Infantry at all

²⁰ Sources are the "Vermont in the Civil War" website, and Peck

²¹ The source for this section is the Rutland Daily Herald and globe, March 18, 1879

the major battles of the Overland Campaign. At North Anna River his conduct won him his second brevet of major.²²

The 4th and 2d regulars were hit so hard by the fighting that they were reduced to a mere remnant of 200 men, and were detailed under the command of Captain Cain for guard duty at the headquarters of General Grant, and remained there until after the surrender of Lee's army. The arduous service of Captain Cain may be gathered from the fact that his single regiment lost over 1,400 men during the battles of the rebellion.

Major Cain remained in the service after the war, and eventually went on to serve in the Western Territories.

He died on March 16, 1879 (age 39) of the accumulation of service-related physical issues. He was initially buried out west, but his remains were returned to Rutland and he is interred at Evergreen Cemetery.

Edwin F. Reynolds²³

A member of the Rutland Light Guards, Edwin F. Reynolds went with the unit when it enlisted virtually en-masse to form Company K of the 1st Regiment.

On October 8, 1861, he reenlisted in the 6th Regiment and was commissioned a captain, and commanding officer of Company F.

On April 16, 1862, Company F was one of the units of the 6th Regiment chosen to attack the rebel fortifications at Lee's Mill, Virginia, during which he was killed in action.

G. G. Benedict provides the following account of his death: "Among the killed was Captain E. F. Reynolds of Company F., who received a serious wound in the hip, in spite of which he pressed on at the head of his company, when a bullet pierced his breast, killing him instantly. He was a brave and patriotic soldier, and his loss was deeply felt in the regiment."

The Rutland Light Guards gave Captain Reynolds a military funeral, and his remains were sent to his childhood home in Greenwich, New York.

²² Brevet commands are awarded for gallantry and/or meritorious conduct.

²³ Vermont Civil War.org and RHS Quarterly Volume X, No. 2 "The Rutland Light Guards"

The Ordeal of the 7th Vermont Infantry²⁴

The 7th Vermont Infantry was “the Rutland regiment”. It counted the highest number of Rutlanders (over 170) of all the regiments, and spent almost its entire time in the Deep South.

The Regiment was formed as part of President Lincoln’s call for 500,000 volunteers in July 1861, and was organized at Rutland in early February 1862. Its officer corps included Rutlanders Colonel George T. Roberts (commanding officer) and E. A. Morse (quartermaster).

Immediately upon its formation, the Regiment was detailed to General Butler’s southern expeditionary department (the Army of the Gulf) in the Deep South, and set out for its destination (Ship Island, Louisiana) on March 14, 1862. A harbinger of things to come was that two men died during the passage.

In the first few months of its duty in the New Orleans area, the Regiment was subjected to a succession of conditions that seriously impaired its viability as a fighting force.

The area in which they were located experienced repeated flooding and subsequent receding of water, enabling the proliferation of contaminated material. This vicious cycle caused the spread of several illnesses and diseases: fever, malaria and dysentery among the most severe.

In June, when the Regiment embarked for combat at Vicksburg, its numbers had been reduced to 750, with 130 men in the hospital. Several officers were on the sick list, including Colonel Roberts. Of the 750 men who turned out for duty, approximately one third were ailing and effectively unfit for duty.

Things would get worse. The daily activities at Vicksburg included heavy fatigue duty in intense heat and swampy conditions, the same environmental obstacles that had been faced in New Orleans. In addition, there were no tents, so the men were confined to the transport ships. These factors caused the numbers of men on sick call to skyrocket. Not having anticipated this extreme situation, the medical staff soon ran out of medicine.

By the middle of July, the Regiment could field no more than 4 officers and 100 men who were fit for duty.

The Regiment was subsequently replenished with recruits (in excess of 600 over the remainder of the war) to re-establish its fighting strength. In November 1862, the Regiment was sent to Florida, where it was assigned garrison duty at Fort Barancas and Fort Pickens.

The 7th remained in the South until 1866, making it the longest-serving of any of the Vermont units.

²⁴ Benedict, George Grenville. “Vermont in the Civil War” (Burlington VT: Free Press Association, 1888), volume 2

The Regiment experienced the highest percentage of deaths by disease of all the Vermont units. The number of men in the 7th Regiment who died from disease was 379, out of a total of 1,572, or 24%. (By comparison, the next highest number of Vermont volunteers who died from disease was the 9th Regiment, 232 out of 1,878 or 12%.)

The Death of Colonel Roberts²⁵

In addition to incurring the extraordinary losses described, the 7th Regiment lost its commanding officer, Rutlander George T. Roberts, to rebel bullets at the Battle of Baton Rouge.

Colonel Roberts had been in the hospital, suffering from the same maladies that would take the lives of so many of his men. He was able to leave his sick bed and journey up the Mississippi to rejoin his unit.

He was with the unit for only a brief period before the unit, part of the infantry brigade commanded by General Thomas Williams, engaged the enemy at Baton Rouge. During the battle, Colonel Roberts was in front of his unit giving orders when he was hit in the neck by a rebel bullet. His men were carrying him to the rear when he was struck in the leg by another bullet. The latter wound proved to be fatal, and he died two days later. General Williams was also killed during this battle.

After the war, a post of the Grand Army of the Republic was formed in Rutland, and named the Roberts Post, Number 14.

The Death of Lieutenant Sennott

John T. Sennott was born in Ireland, and was a schoolteacher in East Rutland. Upon joining, he was immediately elected Lieutenant. He served with the 13th Regiment and died at Gettysburg of wounds received while leading his men in battle.

At Gettysburg, on July 3, 1863, the 13th Vermont Infantry was participating (with the 16th) in the flank attack which was instrumental in repelling Pickett's charge. During the attack, he was struck in the forehead by a piece of shell and died a day or two after in a hospital and was buried at Gettysburg. His remains were subsequently removed to Vermont and interred in the Catholic Cemetery (St. Bridget's) at West Rutland."²⁶

²⁵ Ibid

²⁶ Ancestry.com-US Civil War Soldier Records and Profiles (Roster of VT Volunteers: War of the Rebellion 1861-66, History of the 13th Vermont Volunteers, These Honored Dead: The Union Casualties at Gettysburg)

States the Rutland Herald: "The brilliant conduct to the company of which Lieutenant Sennott was a member, at the battle of Gettysburg; the conspicuous part it bore in the dashing charge of Thursday upon the rebels and the recapture of the guns of a company of the 5th regular artillery, bringing off rebel cannon besides, is well known to our readers. Lieutenant Sennott took a prominent part in this charge, and conducted himself throughout the battle with great bravery, until he was, at it proves, mortally wounded.....

Lieutenant Sennott was active in enlisting men for his company when the 13th regiment was formed; he has shown that he was a most gallant soldier and patriotic man, and his memory will live in the hearts of a grateful community."²⁷

After the war, a post of the Grand Army of the Republic was formed in West Rutland, and named the Sennott Post, Number 12.

Rutland Remembers its Own

Posts of the Grand Army of the Republic (GAR) were formed in Rutland and West Rutland. The Grand Army of the Republic Memorial Building was erected in 1868, and served as the home of both of these posts. (The GAR and the Memorial Building in downtown Rutland were featured in "Rutland in the Civil War – Part 1".)²⁸

²⁷ The Rutland Herald, July 28, 1863.

²⁸ RHS Quarterly Volume 41, No. 2 "Rutland in the Civil War – Part 1"

The Aftermath

The Civil War, for all its horrors, had effects on trauma response in our country, as well as on treatments for diseases. In the post-war decades of the 19th century, medical care raced ahead in these and other areas. (This was discussed in “Civil War Medical Care”).²⁹

On the contrary, the nation did little to assure that treatment of POWs would be any better in the future.

Mainly, the nation’s sincerest hope was that there would never be anything resembling the Civil War again.

Also, recriminations about which side was more at fault for the deaths and misery lasted for decades, fueled by the dialogue of not only the prisoners themselves but also that of self-serving politicians and the media.

In the intervening years from the Civil War until today, there have been several peacetime conferences focused on defining rules for treatment of POWs. The Geneva Conventions especially have set the standards for the world today. These conventions and standards have improved things, but only when the parties feel compelled to abide by what they have agreed to.

The life of a prisoner of war has never been an easy one.

Civil War POW Memorials and Museums

Civil War prison organizations maintain prisoner graves at some of the cemeteries (Johnson’s Island, Elmira Prison Camp, Andersonville are a few). In most cases, very little remains of the prison sites themselves.

At Andersonville efforts have been made to preserve the past and use it as a means to educate the public on the subject of prisoner of war treatment.

The Andersonville National Cemetery (established in 1865) and the Camp Sumter Military Prison site comprise two thirds of the Andersonville National Historic Site. These became part of the National Park System in 1970.³⁰

The third component is the National Prisoner of War Museum, which opened its doors in 1998. This facility has artifacts and exhibits which tell the story of Andersonville, and also provide an overview of the experience of prisoners of war throughout American history.³¹

²⁹ RHS Quarterly Volume 43, No. 3 “Civil War Medical Care”

³⁰ National Parks Service: Andersonville National Historic Site

³¹ Ibid

The environment emphasizes education through experience – what was (and is) it like to be a prisoner of war? The goal is to raise public awareness and knowledge of this tragic element of life. The unfortunates who become prisoners of war through no fault of their own often suffer and die in anonymity. They sometimes become an afterthought as the world moves on.

They deserve better.



WWW.NPS.GOV/ANDE

*The Andersonville National Cemetery as it looks today, at
Andersonville, Ga.*



WWW.NPS.GOV/ANDE

The National Prisoner of War Museum at Andersonville, Georgia

Conclusion

“The hero who gives his life for a cause, while shouts of comrades cheer his heart, thrilling with grand emotions, is looked upon with admiration. But he who suffers gradual starvation, temptation, and despair, for many, many weary months, and at last seals his devotion with death, is he not the truest hero? Many a one lies today in his prison grave, which bears no name or mark to tell how he died, or what he suffered, or how true he was to the cause for which he renounced home, happiness, and life; but a grateful nation will recognize and remember in coming time the devotion which has done so much to perpetuate and preserve national life and honor.”

– Warren Lee Goss

Warren Lee Goss knew well the suffering that was the daily routine in a Civil War prison camp. He witnessed many of his compatriots enduring months of those painful days, and then paying the ultimate price for the good of their country.

Although Private Goss's words clearly were directed toward the lives of prisoners of war, they could easily have included the men who became ill and died slow and agonizing deaths in camps, hospitals and prisons.

Then there were those who suffered debilitating injuries during the War and who, although they escaped death, returned home to live the rest of their lives with major disabilities.

These destinies were certainly not what the men expected when they signed up to fight for the nation. We owe them not only our gratitude, but also our commitment to learn well the lessons that the Civil War has taught.

Soon, the Rutland Historical Society will be entering the final year of our commemoration of the Civil War.

During that time, the Society will continue to present relevant and timely articles, and will continue to expand the online information sources for Civil War related topics.

Sources

Main sources for this quarterly are:

Benedict, George Grenville. "Vermont in the Civil War" (Burlington VT: Free Press Association, 1888), volumes 1 and 2

Revised Roster of Vermont Volunteers, during the War of the Rebellion 1861 -1866, Theodore S. Peck, Adjutant General

"Civil War Prisons", edited by William B. Hesseltine (The Kent State University Press)

Vermont in the Civil War website: www.vermontcivilwar.org

National Parks Service: Andersonville National Historic Site website: <http://www.nps.gov/ande/index.htm>

The Rutland Herald

"The Soldier's Story of his Captivity at Andersonville, Belle Isle, and Other Rebel Prisons", Warren Lee Goss, (Lee and Shepard, Boston, 1868)

For Further Reading

A number of Civil War related books can be found on the free Internet Archive. Go to "archive.org", select "text" and place the book title in the search box at the top. You may read the book on-line or you may also download the complete book in a few minutes. It is all FREE.

Here are six (6) titles that are available:

Revised Roster of Vermont Volunteers

Vermont in the Civil War (2 Vol.) –G.G. Benedict

Vermont Riflemen in the War for the Union – William Y. W. Ripley

History of Rutland County, Vermont – Smith & Rann

The Vermont Brigade in the Shenandoah Valley – Aldace F. Walker

Narrative of the Service of the Officers and Enlisted men of the 7th Regiment of Vermont – William Holbrook

Rutland Historical Society Quarterlies related to the Civil War are available on our web site (rutlandhistory.com). These include the following titles:

Vol. X	No. 2 Rutland Light Guards
Vol. XXII	No. 2 Rutland Blacks in the Civil War
Vol. XXIII	No. 3 Horace Henry Baxter
Vol. XXIV	No. 2 John T. Kelly –Civil War Diary
Vol. XXV	No. 2 General Wheelock G. Veazey
Vol. XXVIII	No. 1 Civil War Diary of Charles B. Mead
Vol. 32	No. 1 Final Civil War Diary of Charles Mead
Vol. 41	No. 2 Rutland in the Civil War
Vol. 41	No. 3 Rutland in the Civil War – The Home Front
Vol. 42	No. 3 Rutland in the Civil War– The Sharpshooters
Vol. 43	No. 3 Civil War Medical Care



Above: One of the windows from the GAR Memorial Hall building (razed in 1931). This is on display in the main floor gallery of the Rutland Historical Society.

The flags represent the West Rutland Post 12 (the Sennott post) and the Rutland Post 14 (the Roberts post), in honor of the two men whose deaths in combat are memorialized.

The GAR Memorial Hall was featured in "Rutland in the Civil War – (Part 1)", published in 2011.

The lives and army careers of Colonel Roberts and Lieutenant Sennott were also included in "Rutland in the Civil War – (Part 1)".